

LONESTAR NEWS

SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION, 2BDE

FOB KALSU, IRAQ



January 1, 2006



Words from Lone Star 6

Mar Haba, (Hello in Arabic),

The Lonestars have been in Iraq for almost two weeks now and are beginning to get set into our daily routines, if that is possible in a combat zone.

The holidays made us all appreciate what we have. Even though we missed you all, we took advantage of spending time with our fellow Soldiers. Some took the opportunity to attend services while others just took advantage of the moment. The insurgents were also in a giving mood as they fired several mortars into our FOB on Christmas morning. Fortunately no one was injured.

The battalion is very busy accomplishing our assigned missions. We spent several days with the unit we're replacing letting them show us all they can about the area, how they operated and passed on valuable pointers to assist in assuming the mission. By the time you read this we will be fully in charge of all operations in the area.

HHC formed the foundation for our Mobile Iraqi training team (Mitt) which is working daily with the Iraqi military. They are operating on FOB Charlie about 25 miles from Kalsu. We've started training skills from Map Reading, GPS, to the advanced staff operations. We've found that most Soldiers world wide are the same, complaining about pay and food. We are making good friends and in this culture you have to establish trust before you can make any headway in conducting business.

Hurricanes are also running the detention facility, running patrols escorting detainees to prisons in Baghdad or just moving Soldiers around the battle field. They also have a big role in providing protection for our FOB by manning guard towers and conducting many other missions.

The Stalkers are getting a run for their money operating all their reconnaissance systems in support of the Brigade. Their Soldiers are scouring the environment with all their advanced systems which provide very critical intelligence helping to capture insurgents or spot IEDs so we can destroy them before affecting our Soldiers.

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Reenlistments

SSG Green	SGT Patterson	SPC Burch
SGT Brown, W	SPC Thompson, J.	SSG Moton
SGT Brown, H	SPC Brewer	SSG Hernandez
SPC Rhome	SSG Maples	SGT Stoneburner
SGT Killion	SGT Giselbach	SSG Madison

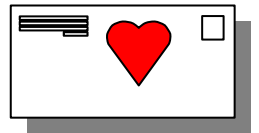
Promotions

PFC Braiser	SSG Waan	PFC Sanderlin
PFC Santana	SGT Salceda	SSG Harrison
SSG Moton		

Births

SGT Shakir	PFC Merritt
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OIF Mailing Addresses



FOB Kalsu:

SPC John Doe
Company, STB, 2BCT, 4ID
Unit # 40503
APO, AE 09312 - 0503

FOB Duke:

SPC John Doe
Company, STB, 2BCT, 4ID in duty with 204th FSB
Unit # 43501
APO, AE 09329-3501

FOB Charlie:

SPC John Doe
Company, STB, 2BCT, 4ID in duty with 1-10 CAV
Unit # 60801
APO, AE 09332-0801

The Stalker interrogators are out on the battle field daily and are quickly adapting to the tenuous mission of finding information by talking to locals. The Fox platoon is and will be on the road frequently providing security escorts and patrolling the area. Some of the Soldiers are extremely happy to use systems which they only train on once a quarter back at Ft Hood. These sharp Soldiers are continuing to discover new and improved ways to use these systems to help in the fight.

The Bulldogs continue to provide the rock solid communications backbone for the brigade. The company is split on two major FOBs with one or two Soldiers at the others. They've overcome many technical challenges using the New Joint Network Node (satellite communication system). We are the first Division to solely use it as our main means of communications. Bulldog Soldiers are also performing many other nontraditional missions including FOB security and running the Brigade computer help desk. These talented Soldiers work extremely hard so no one experiences any outage either for missions or communications with loved ones at home. So the next time you get an email or phone call from your Soldier, remember that the Bulldogs made it possible.

The Brigade lost two Soldiers to combat action on 27 December and one on 29 December. I ask you to say a prayer for the families and friends of those affected in 2-8 Infantry and 1-67 Armor. I also ask for your continued support for our Soldiers, keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

As in our first News letter, I asked one of our young Soldiers to write about his experiences. You might enjoy hearing things from his perspective. Here it is.

PRIVATE TALK

Palm trees, bright sun, wonderful people, and free food four times a day. It's almost like a vacation. Then you realize, "Oh yeah, this is Iraq". Yup, were here. Actually, we've been here for about 2 weeks now. All around, it is not all that bad. I have been working twelve hour shifts, as are most of the other junior enlisted. Pretty nice, considering the sixteen hour shift I had been promised. A lot of things are changing on the FOB (Forward Operation Base). They just opened up the new internet café. Although Sgt. Major said it is not to be called a café, because there are no mocha chinos, or lattes. Guess we'll just go with, "that internet place." The locals here are pretty nice too. They have shops set up in a little circle, kind of like a flea market. You can get anything from dishes, to mp3 players, to burned DVD's, which you must be careful about. You never know what you might get. And how they get five movies on one disc, I guess I will never know.

My apartment isn't too bad either. At least I call it my apartment. It is actually a big metal box with a door. Better than a tent though. The room isn't bad at all. The room mate on the other hand. I have never in my life met someone who could snore, run, and talk, all while sleeping. I guess I can give up some sleep to have air conditioning and a heater.

Chow is pretty good here too. Last night we had fried shrimp and steak. I don't ask how they get shrimp in the desert. Not bad though. For me though, the best part of chow is the desserts. You can get anything from Baskin Robbins to cherry cobbler. Don't be surprised if your loved one comes home with a few extra pounds. They have a valid excuse.

There is also a weight room, though I have yet to go to it, maybe too much cobbler. But the people who have told me about it said it was pretty good, having both weights and cardiovascular equipment. Guess I should probably make it in there sometime.

So all together, it is not all that bad here. No it's not quite home, but I don't think a year here will be all that bad. But don't worry, everyone here still misses home and can't wait to get back. Besides, there's still no beer here.

I trust and pray that you all had a safe and happy holiday Season. We all look forward to the promises that 2006 will bring, one of Peace and a speedy return home.

Shukran (thanks) for all you do.
Lone Star 6



MAJ Hoenig and other MITT members meet with members of the Iraqi Army



Christmas Eve Festivities: Some members of battalion staff enjoy a “near beer” and caroling around the “bonfire”

HHC Hurricanes

The HHC, Special Troops Battalion Hurricanes hit the Iraqi ground running in December. As usual, the missions shouldered by the Hurricanes are many and varied. The company is currently supporting Military Training Team missions, is manning the Division Internment Facility, providing critical maintenance support to the battalion and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, as well as manning guard towers, providing oversight in the dining facility, support to the Kalsu mayor cell, support for combat logistical patrols and communications as well as supervision of the internet café.

Relieving an outbound unit is never easy; the Hurricanes were tasked with relieving TWO units simultaneously. A/98, a cavalry troop of over 200 personnel and the internment facility both had to be replaced by HHC, STB. Over a period of two weeks, the Hurricanes have successfully relieved both units, with 28 vehicles being technically inspected and signed for and the detention facility operating smoothly, among other things. These two feats are a testament to the incredible work ethic, professionalism and tenacity displayed by all Hurricanes.

The Hurricanes celebrated eight reenlistments and several promotions. Reenlistments include SSG Hernandez, SSG Green, SSG Maples, SSG Madison, SGT Killion, SGT Patterson, SPC Rhome and SPC Thompson. Promotions include SGT Waan to SSG, PV2 Sanderlin to PFC and PV2 Santana to PFC. Happy holidays to all of you defending the homefront, a million thanks for all your support and keeping us in your hearts.

HURRICANE 6
CPT David Bolender



Hurricane reenlistment: CPT Bolender reenlists SSG Hernandez



SGT Leban, SFC Lazaro, and LT Olzacki plan a mission for the FOX PLT

Alpha Company Stalkers

The Shadow Stalkers finally arrived in Iraq, just in time for the holidays! We arrived in Kuwait and spent 2 weeks in Kuwait and then convoyed/flew into FOB Kalsu.

First Platoon, consisting of Headquarters, Common Ground Station, Trojan Spirit, and Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Maintenance sections, leads the way! Captain Carter and ISG Mendez have been working hard to ensure mission success. PFC Carter and PFC Wang are supporting our fight with the Mobile Iraqi Training Team (MITT) while the rest of 1st Platoon conducts missions from Kalsu. Our transition with the outgoing unit is almost complete and we are ready to commence Operations and Support. Morale is high (probably because of the good food the Army has been feeding us) and don't worry, we do get to take daily showers if we so choose. We miss and love our friends and family back home and hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Send mail! The TUAV platoon wishes SPC Preston the best of luck "on the outside". The platoon also would like to congratulate SFC (P) Moore on his pending promotion and hope that they can visit him in Taji when and if he moves north. The platoon is anxiously waiting the moment when they can start performing their mission out here.

Since leaving our loved ones and deploying in support of OIF 5-07 on 26NOV05, Prophet PLT has assumed operations in FOB Kalsu. Apart from being away from our loved ones, the holidays on FOB Kalsu have been festive. The decorations include a Christmas tree in the Dining facility, Christmas lights in our chapel area, and a sleigh with Santa outside Brigade Headquarters. The Christmas dinner at the Dining facility included a choice of ham and turkey with stuffing, mashed potatoes, carrots and green beans. There was Christmas music playing with festive pies and cakes.

SPC Saliba celebrated his birthday this month, complete with a piece of cake from the Dining Facility, presented to him by the FOX RECON platoon. Physical training is still happening on a regular basis, so we can be ready for anything. It's also necessary given the amount of delicious food the Dining Facility provides for us. PFC McDaniels was able to lift SGT McDonald the other day during an exercise, not an easy feat for anyone to accomplish, and she managed on her first try. With vehicles and personnel all set we are ready for anything that might be sent our way!

Shadow Stalkers have settled in the best they can. We have beds with mattresses and hard floors, full-service laundry, a post office, a gym and a medical center. Most of us are sleeping in tents (but they have heat/ac). All in all, everybody is in good spirits.

STALKERS LEAD THE WAY!



Words from the Chaplain

Hi everybody, thank God we all made it to Kuwait and Iraq safe, and we have started our mission. The religious support team that we have in FOB Kalsu where the majority of Lonestar Soldiers are is a very complete one. Just now we are providing the Soldiers with a Gospel Service, Traditional Protestant Service, Contemporary Protestant Service, Catholic Communion Services (we will receive a visit from a Catholic chaplain often), Later Saint Days (LDS) Service, Spanish Services, Bible studies and more. On December 24th, we conducted two Christmas Eve Candle Light Services. On Christmas Day we received the visit of a Catholic chaplain, and he provided a Catholic Mass at Kalsu, in addition to the other services that we had on schedule. All of these religious activities help to support the spiritual life and the morale of our Soldiers, but life still goes on here and in the rear. We have already had some Soldiers that have lost loved ones at home. For that reason it is important that we keep praying all the time for our Soldiers and their families. That we can all have the strength and wisdom that we need to cope with this deployment and the happiness and sadness that we are facing every day.

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress my God, in whom I trust." (Psalm 91)



Soldiers participate in a Candle Light Service on Christmas Eve

Bravo Company Bulldogs

Greetings from Iraq. The Bulldogs have done a superb job of setting up the Warhorse Brigade's communication network. Both platoons had their systems operational and ready to provide both secret and unclassified communications to their subscribers quicker than I expected. I am extremely proud of their ability and knowledge considering the limited experience we have with our new equipment. I am lucky to have such a great group of Soldiers in the company; they make my job very easy.

The living conditions are pretty good and should improve as time goes on. We are slowly getting more living containers which will give the Soldiers more privacy than the tents. The food is good, although it is repetitive and the PX has the basic necessities and should also get better over time.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to SGT Harry Brown and his family for extending their commitment to our nation by re-enlisting on the 20th of December. His decision to continue serving under the current circumstances speaks volume about his character.

We will be promoting Sergeant Moton to Staff Sergeant on the 1st of January, a promotion that she has earned with a lot of hard work and long hours as we prepared for this deployment. I am very proud of her and know that she will excel at her new rank.

Everyone has a lot of motivation as we are executing the mission that we have been training for over the last year. The Soldiers are displaying the same great sense of humor that they have always had, which makes the time away from family and friends easier for everyone.

Bulldog 6 out.



Thumbs-up: A Bravo Company Soldier shows his support for the mission



STB vehicles travel through the streets of Iraq